

U.S. Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign Working Together to Support Veterans



Dear Friends:

There have been a lot of developments in recent months with regard to legislation benefiting our nation's veterans. We wanted to give you a quick update.

We are pleased to announce that we have recently introduced a bill in the Senate to authorize up to \$250 million for construction of a new veterans' hospital, outpatient clinic, and nursing home for southern Nevada. We have the support of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and now we are waiting for the results of an independent Veterans Administration commission (the "CARES Commission") to approve these new facilities. Hopefully, construction can begin as soon as the Commission approves the plan and the VA selects suitable sites. It is critical that we respond to the growing demands for veterans' health care in the southern Nevada region. We are confident these new facilities will result in decreased waiting times and improved care for all veterans.

With regard to the VA budget for Fiscal Year 2004, the Senate has worked hard to ensure that there is no shortfall in funding for veterans' health care. It is important that Congress maintains appropriate funding in this area and does not leave the veterans' health care account underfunded. We will stand by the Senate bill, which puts the money where it belongs: with America's veterans.

We are also working hard to end the long-standing tax on disabled veterans – also known as "concurrent receipt." This outdated law, which requires disabled veterans to deduct the amount of disability compensation from their retirement pay, is unfair and needs to be repealed. The Senate acted this year to repeal the restrictions on concurrent receipt, and we are hoping to reach an agreement with our colleagues in the House that would finally end this tax. Please be assured that we will continue to fight for full concurrent receipt for all veterans.

Finally, as many of you know, we are continuing to work for the establishment of a community-based outpatient clinic for veterans in Elko. We have written to Secretary Principi and to the Chairman of the CARES Commission requesting that the clinic be elevated to the highest priority for the VA and be established in Elko as soon as possible. We are also working with our friends on the Veterans Affairs Committees in the House and Senate to get the clinic authorized and funded.

As our military continues to do battle in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are reminded daily of the enormous bravery and sacrifices displayed by those who wear the uniform of the U.S. armed forces. We know that your service and sacrifices helped keep this nation strong and free. For all veterans, and especially for veterans in Nevada, we will continue fighting for you. We thank you for your service.

A blue ink signature of Harry Reid, written in a cursive style.

HARRY REID
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of John Ensign, written in a cursive style.

JOHN ENSIGN
United States Senator



Sens. Reid and Ensign march together at the Nevada Day parade in Carson City.



Sen. Ensign pins a purple heart on WWII veteran Nichols Theodoresis.



Sen. Reid meets with American Legion members from Nevada (from left to right): Tim Tetz, Lionel Motta, Reid, Ron Gutzman and Sam Ruvolo.

In Remembrance

Nevada 9/11 Victims

Barbara G. Edwards (58)

Las Vegas, NV. Aboard American Flight 77.
Teacher at Palo Verde High School

Wilson 'Buddy' Flagg

Retired US Navy Admiral Wilson 'Buddy' Flagg, of, Millwood, Virginia, and a part-time Las Vegas resident on American Airlines Flight 77.

Lieutenant Colonel Karen J. Wagner,
UNLV Class of 1982

Business Administration Major and UNLV Army ROTC Cadet.
From Houston, TX. Served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Medical Personnel with the Army Surgeon General's Office at the Pentagon.

Operation Enduring Freedom Casualties:

Private First Class Matthew A. Commons (21),
Army of Boulder City, NV.

March 4, 2002, in Afghanistan.

S/Sgt. Kerry W. Frith, (37) Army. Las Vegas, NV.
February 21, 2002, in the Philippines.

Army Specialist Jason A. Disney (20) Army.
Fallon, NV.

February 13, 2002, killed in an accident at Bagram Air Base near Kabul.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Casualties:

Staff Sgt. Cameron Bryan

Sarno (43) Army. Las Vegas, NV & Waipahu, HI (first to die from Las Vegas on September 1, 2003. A member of the 257th Transportation Company.

Capt. Josh Byers (29)

Army ranger and paratrooper was a company commander in the 3rd Cavalry Regiment.
Graduate of West Point.

First Lieutenant Frederick E.

Pokorney. Nye, NV (first Nevadan killed in action)
Marine. 1989 Tonopah High School Graduate.

Lance Cpl. Donald J. Cline Jr.
(21) Sparks, NV. Marine.

March 23, 2003 in Iraq.

Lance Cpl. Michael J. Williams.
Marine.

(Lived in Phoenix but had family in Reno.)

Wounded:

Sgt. Jeramy McLoughlin

A member of the 72nd Military Police Company, Nevada National Guard